

MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church & Society REPORT

Report 18

February, 1978

FOCUS ON THE AUXILIARY SYNDROME

Serious questioning of the role of women in the Mennonite church coupled with an increase in the number of working women with less volunteer time available, raises with new urgency the question, should there be separate women's organizations in the Mennonite church family? Is specialization according to sex valid? Are women's organizations playing a unique role within the church or duplicating congregational tasks? Is separation a matter of choice or lack of alternative channels within congregation or conference? Are the goals and work of women's organizations seen (it's a different question whether or not they are) as church priorities or is the "ladies' work" understood as auxiliary?

The word "auxiliary," akin to the Greek word auxein (to increase), means offering or providing help, functioning in a subsidiary category, performing a supplementary function. In contrast to Paul's "body of Christ" image where all members are parts of the body with the same care for one another, all indispensable to the well-being and functioning of the self, auxiliary implies a helpful but "outside" contribution to the central core of the church. "Help" means giving of oneself to complete or supplement another's work, task or responsibility; a child helps a parent with the parent's dishes, a secretary helps a president with his work. It is clear that many women including leadership in existing Mennonite women's organizations have been struggling against this auxiliary image and beginning to claim full membership in the church community, a role which includes shared involvement in setting priorities and in decision-making with regard to the entire church's ministries. Although willingness to help others is a critical value for Christians committed to servanthood, many women note that it seems odd that within the body of Christ women should so often "help" men with church work (frequently defined and administered by men) while men seldom "help" women with the work of women's organizations.

Mennonite women, however, find themselves in many places in relation to the question of separate women's organizations. Some have washed their hands of such structures entirely. Others find their most meaningful space in the church within these structures. My own decision so far has been not to participate in separate women's organizations as one way of holding fast to a vision of the church as a body of Christ with specialized functions according to gifts rather than according to sex. Genuine love, which it seems to me is never less than justice, involves negotiations about goals and who will perform which tasks rather than assumptions about roles based on historical practice, unexamined interests or potential. Men can (and some would like to) provide childcare, coffee, roll bandages and set up spiritual life retreats; women can move chairs, report to conference bodies, organize budgets and visit prisons. While specialization according to gifts, interests or more just distribution of maintenance tasks (church "housework") may

find many men and women preferring traditional tasks, such procedure would allow those who would choose alternatives the freedom to explore them. Trusting another to do new tasks that one feels one could do less awkwardly or better oneself, taking the risk of experimenting with new responsibility or agreeing to take responsibility for lower status work is not altogether comfortable, but it is a necessary aspect of personal growth and of care for one another.

Although my own church-related energies have not been focused within the official women's organizations (the Task Force is a temporary structure to serve as an advocate for women's peace and justice concerns until broader church structures include a significant proportion of women in leadership roles) I think that holding to the vision of genuine interdependence might mean something different in other situations. I have always had opportunities to place my energies elsewhere in the church, having been involved in rather unusual congregations, and because of this have felt that nonparticipation in women's organizations was a way of saying "no" to a structure that I felt was allowing men in the church to accept some contributions of women without taking them seriously in decision-making. However, in congregations or conferences where there are limited or no possibilities for women to participate fully through regular structures, alternative organizations may be needed. I would hope that such an organization would not be solely a channel for unused gifts but would accept responsibility for moving the entire church on its way towards becoming a body where leadership and services at all levels were the shared responsibility of both men and women. Such an organization, it seems to me, would:

1. be self-consciously temporary. Members would be ready to work for the end of "women's" organizations assuming the needs the groups were meeting would be considered by the entire church when setting priorities.
2. make clear attempts to integrate its concerns into wider congregation or conference structures, because of the number of women in church they could be powerful advocates for special needs they might see.

3. give priority to leadership training for women (mission/service work seems a congregational task) including such things as seminary or administrative scholarships, how to chair and participate in business meetings or group discussions more effectively, workshops on Bible study and teaching tools) so that more women will be prepared when congregational or conference wide leadership positions open.

4. encourage women to actively support other women by nomination, voice and vote for leadership positions (as pastors or assistant pastors, as council members, teachers of mixed Sunday school classes, special resource people, college or seminary board members, conference officers).

With such concerns in mind, I have been curious about the current shape and direction of Mennonite women's organizations. Katie Funk Wiebe, Task Force member who organized material for this issue, invited a number of women from different conference women's groups to respond to such questions as: What are the primary interests of your organization? How many women are attending and if there has been a drop in participation, why? Does it continue to fill a useful role? What directions do you see the organization taking?

The responses Katie received to these questions reflect the fact that the questioning of separate structures for women is being asked not only by those who have chosen not to participate in them. At the same time some aspects of the responses which follow take issue with the emphasis I have outlined above. Conversation begins. We invite your letters and comments about the need for and direction of separate women's organizations in the church. --ggk

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ADJUNCT NOT AUXILIARY

The women's organization in the Mennonite Church was born in response to physical needs resulting from catastrophes such as famine and war. For more than half a century, it remained an auxiliary of the Mission Board. However, with the restructuring of

our denomination in 1971, WMSC chose to become part of the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries through an adjunct relationship. This deliberate shift recognized the new dimensions into which WMSC had moved by that time.

A good deal of criticism has been directed at women's groups because much of their activity has traditionally had to do with providing material aid--with "doing" rather than "being." While there may be some justification or validity in this kind of judgment, it must also be recognized that basic physical needs in our world continue to escalate, and hopefully we will continue to respond.

During the last ten years there has been a growing awareness among women of the need to be present with persons in one-to-one relationships as well as to provide material aid in situations of need. Many times the most desperate need is for relationships rather than for food, clothing or shelter.

Women have come to recognize the need for continuing personal growth, for mental stimulation, for learning about and speaking to issues. They want to be informed, to participate in the decision-making processes, and to be recognized as an integral part of the life of the church, not an appendage to it. More congregations are taking into account the need to integrate all facets of the church's ministry, including the women's organization, and are adjusting structures to implement needed changes.

Interest and involvement in spiritual growth disciplines have increased, as is evidenced in the growing number of Bible study groups, retreats, and other occasions for in-depth sharing. In some congregations the women's organization is a primary channel for outreach in the community.

Women who would otherwise have had little opportunity to develop and exercise their leadership gifts have benefitted from the training ground provided in the women's organizations. They have thus been encouraged and prepared to accept other leadership responsibilities that have opened to them.

It is understandable and legitimate that not all women in the Mennonite Church want to be part of the women's organization nor do they find it the best channel for utilizing their gifts. I believe it is equally legitimate to recognize that many women do find growth and fulfillment within the structures of an organization such as WMSC.

Local WMSC leaders are often concerned about the reduced attendance at meetings due in part to more women working outside the home. I think we need to understand that absence from the regular daytime meetings does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest or involvement in ministry. Perhaps we women need most of all to mutually recognize and release the richness in the variety of our gifts.

Our most exciting development at this time is the planning for spiritual renewal retreats in each conference during 1978. The focus of these events will be to train leaders, through personal experience, in the disciplines of silence/meditation, Bible study, journaling, and prayer. These persons can then train congregational representatives in similar retreats, who can in turn help other women in their congregations to experience personally the power of dynamic Bible study and related disciplines.

Perhaps the focus of my article should have been more on specific ways in which I think WMSC has given leadership, e.g., educational scholarships this year totaling \$5,325, of which \$1,075 went to seminary women; funding for the Peace Section workshops; Spanish articles in Voice and a Spanish translation of the Devotional Guide the last two years; etc. Voice has been a vehicle for reporting on events such as the Women in Ministry conference at Lombard; we also try to share the many ways in which women's gifts are exercised in local, conference and church-wide settings.

Neither women in WMSC nor women who choose to not be a part of the organization have arrived. God calls us to keep on searching, to respond in obedience to His leading, to apply the disciplines of faith that produce maturity.

I see the women's organization as a channel for utilizing the gifts of a large segment of women in our denomination, as well as a vehicle for encouraging them to stretch their minds, to develop and exercise more of their God-given potential, and to be ready to move into new responsibilities as doors are opened to them.

--Beulah Kauffman, Executive Secretary,
Women's Missionary and Service Commission
of the Mennonite Church.

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FORUM FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Women in Mission is an organization still very much in the running in the General Conference Mennonite Church. It still supports overseas missions but has broadened its base to include a full scope of conference work. An important function of WM has been to give women the opportunity and forum for developing skills. It has been a training center for those interested in developing positions of leadership within the larger church structure.

One of the main strengths of local WM organizations is the fellowship it provides. Another strength is seen by the hard won acceptance of its representatives on the Commissions and Seminary board and by unique programs which promote special activities for women of other nations.

Much of the studying on women's roles and moral support for reaching out has come from members and non-members. Our servanthood is still demonstrated in giving money, rolling bandages, quilting and serving meals, but in places, WM is also modeling to the world that we can be educated, alert and responsible and still be able to understand Christ's call to be servants of others. In the midst of this there is an attempt to make our societies a support group for all groups of women.

There are difficulties of course, but no more than what the church experiences in general with decreased attendance, shift in lifestyles and mobility. Careers make women pull away from volunteerism needed by women's groups. Perhaps we need to begin

re-interpreting some of the traditional roles in new ways so that our strengths and gifts can speak anew to peoples' needs today.

The future is uncertain. If one was assured that women's organizations would cease and their leadership would be congregationally integrated, that might be argument for disbanding. Until that day comes when everyone feels free to serve on a congregational level, in the capacities of wherever those talents lie, our church structures will continue to suffer from malnutrition because of the rich resources that are being tapped only by our women's organizations.

--Joan Wiebe, General Conference Women in Mission

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FELLOWSHIP AND WORSHIP MEETS NEEDS

Today's society is complex. Needs and hurts of various proportions call for Christian compassion and concern daily. How can we as people of God minister to these needs? Do the women's organizations of our denomination have a part to contribute in this? I sincerely believe we do.

As we look at the programme of our church, many opportunities for service are planned by our church leaders. However, to really serve in the Spirit of Christ, we must function from a deeper level of commitment. Our first commitment must be to serve Christ and to allow our talents to be used via the needs channeled to us through the church programmes.

There are many avenues whereby we can give expression of our faith, whether male or female. Sometimes this is best done jointly, some needs are better suited to the strong masculine figure and some, more to the feminine role. If we can overcome the tendency of classifying these roles as indicated, and rather see each as equals in God's sight, each with specific God given abilities, we will see ourselves freed to function more easily in our capacities.

The Ontario Women's Mission and Service Commission is part of the total church programme

and we view ourselves as such. We do not perceive ourselves as being a church within a church, trying to do "our thing," but rather endeavoring to meet the needs that we are equipped to speak too.

One important aspect of our programme is when we as sisters throughout the District meet for fellowship and worship and to be challenged anew about what our task is as followers of Christ. Many positive responses come to the committee regarding these meetings, indicating to us that they are filling a need not met in the same way in any other way in the total church programme.

Another significant experience is the yearly woman's retreat. These retreats have become a time of sharing and caring, of fellowship and worship, and getting to know each other in a much more intimate way. As we look into the future, we see the women's organization remaining strong, but we must be flexible enough to perhaps change the programme somewhat--broadening it beyond just "sewing circle." We need to look at what are our needs, the needs of the community, and the needs beyond and then seek guidance on how to meet these needs and then to act on them. However, we need to guard against the programme becoming only a secular organization. The challenge of the gospel must continue to be our motivation for whatever we do and what format our programme will take.

As we become more and more aware of social needs, we must be sensitive and willing to take the risk involved in speaking to these areas. It is a significant fact in our W.M.S.C. that when the women are given direction they rise to the challenge and perform their task with a conscientious desire to carry out the assignment, whatever it may be.

I feel that the image of women has changed considerably over the last number of years. The image that is evolving is that women are sincerely willing to help develop the organization to continue to be an avenue whereby we can reach out to others in the name of Christ.

How do we interest all the women of our churches? We could also ask this same question about the men of the church? I think it applies the same. However, the question still stands, especially in relation to the younger sisters. Many of these are working outside the home and because of that, their involvement in W.M.S.C. as it has been in the past is more difficult. In spite of this, we need to be open to sense their needs and also their desire to be involved in the church programme, even though their involvement may differ from the past pattern. Can we be open to change in order to help to meet their needs? Can we programme such times of fellowship as book studies, learning and doing crafts, Bible studies in order to find strength from each other and God's word and then be better prepared to face life as we rub shoulders with the secular world?

Women across our churches fill their days with dozens of beneficial activities and while this is to be commended, we need to emphasize the importance of learning to be the women God has called us to be. Bible study is a major key to the spiritual renewal which is needed in our lives. We dare not overlook this important factor as we plan for the future. It is with great anticipation that we look for the results of the in-depth Bible study helps which the General W.M.S.C. Executive is promoting as the special project for '77 and '78.

Are we in trouble? Is the time here for W.M.S.C. to disband? I would say an emphatic "no". In this time of immense pressure and struggle, the close and intimate fellowship and worship that W.M.S.C. can help to provide, is needed as much as ever. May we continue to search for the Holy Spirit's direction, to help us see ways to meet our needs and then to speak to the needs around and beyond us.

I trust we can say with Paul, "We are labourers together with God."

--Florence Schlegel, Ontario Women's
Missionary and Service Commission

NO NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

To this day there is no national Women's Missionary Service (WMS) organization in Canada or the U.S. in the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The closest we came to that was in the U.S. several years ago when a committee of three--one from each district--developed the program for the year with a selected theme and study book. This has been discontinued. WMS has organizations in three districts in the U.S. and in several, not all, provinces in Canada.

One reason WMS has not been pushed into a stronger role is that it was not considered appropriate to leave missions promotion to the women--missions must be the concern of the entire church.

As with anything else WMS should be reviewed, with questions asked about its usefulness and what direction it should take. The organization gave valuable service in its early years when missionaries needed outfitting for very lengthy terms of service. It also has provided service to churches for social functions. It was WMS which promoted missions in some churches, instead of the entire church body.

Working women, women going back to school to get more education, more community and church involvement--these are affecting attendance and attitudes toward WMS.

Is WMS in trouble? Perhaps. More likely WMS is in the process of changing. How to change, which direction to take, defining the purpose of a WMS today, wondering whether younger women will carry on what has been done so far--these questions are being discussed and must receive attention.

Veering away from busy-work (sewing and quilting only), and meeting for purposes of Bible study or promotion of missions has upgraded the image of WMS to fall in line with interests women are pursuing today. Special functions, a pattern many follow, show promise. One is an overnight and all-day women's retreat away from home. Another is a WMS dinner together with husbands where the entire WMS budget is raised in one well-planned and challenging evening.

Missions interests continue to be focal point for WMS. That is probably its strength. Their emphasis continues to be on assisting with proclamation through prayer and contributions.

Is WMS on its way out? No. Will it continue indefinitely? No one knows. Will it make adjustments and changes? A decided yes. But what these changes will be is unknown. One possibility is to have both women and men working together in what have until now been strictly women's activities. Women can be accused of being discriminatory for having monopolized a vital function in the church for too long.

--Marie K. Wiens, Hillsboro, Kansas, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services

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URBAN WOMEN'S INTEREST SHIFT

Here is a brief series of comments on what I see happening in our own women's organization in our church.

Where are their interests?

The focus for most women seems to be to nurture one's own personal growth, to broaden one's life experiences and spend time being together for fun and fellowship. There seems to be a greater need to reach inward than outward. A sense of mission and social consciousness is shared by a very small minority. Worship tends to follow cautious use of meditations and prayers with little interest in use of innovative forms of worship. Social events are best attended. A small weekday study and conversation group has been going for several years and seems to meet the needs of women who are not employed outside the home.

Participation

Less than half but more than one-third of the potential women in our church take part in our womens' group. Working women, married and single as a rule to not attend or take much interest in the group unless they were active before they became employed. Working women tend to socialize with other working women and full-time homemakers tend to stay together.

Why is it not better attended?

Women seem to have so many other involvements in the urban setting which meet their needs and fill their time that the women's group isn't needed by them. Examples of outside activities: craft classes, yoga classes, Brownie leaders, cub mothers, hockey mothers, home and school offices, university courses and other continuing education, TET, TA, Gestalt and psychotherapy workshops, committee work elsewhere in the church, symphony and theatre attendance and many, many more.

What is the image of women?

It has definitely shifted from primary interest in the home to outside interests in most cases. There is no longer the 'perfect homemaker' image to strive for except by a very few. Some women coming to the city hesitate to participate, fearful lest they get swallowed up into the old "sewing circle" mentality.

Miscellaneous comments

The women in our church family come from many different backgrounds; General Conference Mennonites, Old Mennonites and non-Mennonites of various denominations. Few remain who have the historical ties with the women in the provincial body. Hence there is a lack of interest in the Ontario WMSC meetings, spring and fall.

There is a core of women who appreciate and support the activities of a WMSC. It must continue to exist for them. The rest of the church would need to make some changes if there were no WMSC. How could it function without a food committee for weddings, funerals, conferences, potluck suppers for the whole church, or a home and special interest committee to bring in meals and do laundry for new mothers? WMSC groups do a lot of pastoral care at present.

--Evelyn Horst, London, Ontario

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COMMITMENTS LIE ELSEWHERE

As a young wife and mother I occasionally attended the women's Bon Accord group from our congregation. Soon, however, I found myself busy that night with night school,

a church committee meeting, family, business or community demands. Bon Accord reached out to me. I accepted several invitations to speak, and attended the smaller retreats. Here, some of the questions I seem to have been asking most of my life were spoken to: Who am I now? What is my place in the church? What is the Lord's will for me now? How can I enhance my primary relationships? What is my growing edge? The retreat setting invited goal setting, evaluating, fellowship and growth.

Perhaps Bon Accord has attempted to speak to such questions in additional ways I didn't hear. Perhaps responses were blocked out, or misinterpreted. Perhaps I wanted to be outside the group. I have not made a genuine attempt to become a part of the regular group.

My opportunities for growth and responsibilities in the church and community have increased with time. Presently my commitments and directions are not with Bon Accord.

Why do some women choose to participate in WMSC groups and others do not? There may be questions to which the women's groups might address themselves: How does a group set growth and discipleship goals? What settings are conducive to this happening? Can the group look at and beyond itself objectively and if necessary say goodbye to familiar program which no longer speaks to present needs?

What are the questions from your setting?

--Doris Gascho, Council Chairperson, First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario.

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NEWS

Resource of Women Compiled. Convinced that Mennonite and Brethren in Christ women have insights and gifts to share with the church that are not being taken advantage of, the MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society is compiling a resource listing of women willing to contribute their skills to church organization boards and committees.

The listing, which will include a brief resume of each women's training and experience, will be made available to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions such as colleges, mission boards and other agencies.

Women wanting to be included in the listing should send their resumes by April 1 to Task Force Resource Listing, MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501. (We need you.)

The Travel Fund for Women from Third World countries to the Mennonite World Conference in Wichita, KS, July 25-30, has received \$5236.24 to date. The Task Force on Women, which is sponsoring the fund, has agreed to raise \$10,000, which if reached, will be matched by funds from the Mennonite World Conference budget. The women who will be assisted with the travel fund include Ms. Rhoda Mtoka from Tanzania, Ms. Kimbadi Kasanji from Zaire, Ms. Lisa Christano from Indonesia, Ms. Noriko Matsurra and Ms. Toshiko Aratani from Japan, Ms. Ana Abat de Perez from Argentina, Ms. Ana Jimenez from Columbia and an additional person not yet confirmed. Please send contributions earmarked for the travel fund to MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501.

Katie Funk Wiebe, Hillsboro, Kansas, was one of a few North American women to participate in an India Mennonite women's conference in late 1977. Some of her impressions of Mennonite women in India follow.

While traveling in India several months ago, I was naturally interested in the role of women in church and society. I learned, as I had expected, that India has more women in important positions (government, education) than any other country, but probably more women in subservient roles.

I was constantly amazed at the number of women I met who held M.A.'s (particularly in English literature) or who were working on advanced degrees. I heard more Shakespeare quoted in India in six weeks than in America in six years.

But I also saw many women of the lower castes working on road repair, carrying heavy baskets of broken stone on their

heads or scrounging through garbage. They could neither read nor write.

I saw women in richly embroidered saris, decorated with silver and gold, wearing expensive jewelry. I saw them also in ragged saris, the dried-up flaps of their breasts barely covered. But I never saw evidence of immodest dress at any time despite the poverty and the heat.

I asked about widows. I heard that though some are still discriminated against, they are being encouraged to get an education, so that they can support themselves. Education was always stressed as being one of the answers to India's immense problems regarding family planning, nutrition and so forth.

I asked about women in the church. I saw an ordained deaconess in the Dhamtari Mennonite Church serve communion and take charge of footwashing for the women. In the International Church in Dacca, Bangladesh, a woman served on the board of stewards and served communion. At Nagpur a woman coordinated the first All-India Christian Communications Seminar composed largely of men. I talked with an older national woman who called herself an evangelist. She pastored a small flock of outcaste Hindus in her home. Did the church have a place for women?

The answers I received varied from the traditional ones to bold statements. At the women's conference Bishop P.J. Malagar, coordinator, said in the keynote address, "It is important to underscore that women can be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers . . . Seminary education should not mean only training boys for the leadership in the churches. Equally, we should be sending women to seminary so that they may serve the church as equal partners . . . Women must bear the yoke of the ministry side by side of the men."

After hearing this it came as no surprise when one American missionary told me she didn't think the church in India has as many hangups about women's roles as the American church. "There is so much work to be done here, the question of whether

some should be limited to men is not an issue," she said. The idea she conveyed was the workers are too few and the work too heavy to limit some persons because of sex.

So on Sunday morning at the closing session of the All-India Women's Conference I preached a sermon through an interpreter to an audience composed of delegates and the local congregation. Both preaching and working with an interpreter were new experiences. But I left India wondering whether the problem here in the States is that the Christian church hasn't enough work for everyone to do, which is the reason we get into problems with roles.

A New Film: "Woman Power--A Woman's Place Is . . .", a new Swedish film, illustrates how the stereotype of what a man is and what a woman is are implanted early in Sweden. Prime Minister Olaf Palme explains how the change of textbook stories and pictures throughout Sweden's schools is part of a continuing effort to educate boys and girls as people away from sexual roles. Children are taught to distrust sexism in commercials, women are finding jobs in Sweden's steel industries, and men are becoming nurses and elementary school teachers. The film examines changing attitudes as a result of the slow leveling of role orientations. Interviews with Swedish families where both father and mother work show that new attitudes do not destroy the family and if anything, encourage the father to participate more in child rearing. 28 minutes long. Rental fee: \$35.00. Available from: United Nations Films, 324 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Upcoming Reports will focus on women and the pastoral ministry; black Mennonite women, changing roles of men and women in the family; abused women and children. If you or someone you know has special resources (or opinions) to offer in these areas please notify Gayle Gerber Koontz, 27 Fairlawn St., Everett, MA 02149. Suggestions re.related books, articles, films are especially welcome.

Correction: The November Report noted that Betsy Beyler, Washington, DC, had been part of an MCC delegation to Vietnam. The trip, however, was delayed, and according to plans now will be made in late spring.

Executive members in an Ontario United Mennonite WMA Workshop in October discussed the question, "Where are we in women's groups and where are we going?" reports Anna Mary Brubacher, Kitchener, Ontario. She suggested to the group that the needs of women are different at different age levels. Young mothers and older women need programming for fellowship and stimulation, however, many younger women are presently unhappy with the format. Professional women and women with children in school are too busy for special women's activities. In addition, the fact that many women are involved more actively in the total church program and other community functions means they are less committed to women's meetings. In small groups the women at the workshop shared how they are meeting the needs of women in their groups, how their programming is an integral part of church life and what changes they feel they need to make if they believe women's groups are a vital part of church life.

LETTERS

To Whom It May Concern:

Our fellowship group would like to contribute to the World Conference Travel Fund for Women and are glad of the effort to involve women of Third World countries in this year's World Conference.

We are a group of 12 adults who meet once a week for personal sharing and Bible study and have set up a fund within the group for the purpose of deciding together where to give our tithes and offerings.

I have appreciated receiving and reading the Report published by MCC's Task Force on Women. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Susan Godshall

Susan Godshall

ASSEMBLY ON CONFLICT AND CONCILIATION

Community disputes, intervention and mediation techniques, theological understandings of justice in conflict situations, and prospects for a Mennonite Conciliation Service are the major topics scheduled for the special MCC Peace Section Assembly on April 6-8, 1978.

Resource persons for the assembly will include Rev. John Adams of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, Dr. James Laue of the Center for Community and Metropolitan Studies at the University of Missouri (St. Louis), and Dr. John Howard Yoder of Notre Dame University and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Location for the assembly is Park College, Suburban Kansas City, MO. Attendance is open to all persons who have serious interest or experience in work in conflict situations.

The first proposal for a conciliation service was drafted by Dr. William Keeney of Bethel College in 1976. After further consultations and revisions by Ron Kraybill,

student at Harvard Divinity School, MCC Peace Section adopted the proposal and guidelines for implementation at their annual meeting in December 1977.

In his report, Kraybill stated, "the components necessary for active peacemaking are present within the Mennonite Church. If the components were linked and mobilized, Mennonites could be uniquely equipped; beyond their presently somewhat negative approach to war and conflict . . . to provide active witness to the reconciling power of the Gospel."

The goals of MCS will be to develop a network of local cores and regional groups of trained and experienced persons, who will minister primarily in areas "where they possess some previous credibility, and by virtue of longer-term presence have authentic reason to be involved."

For more information or registration, contact MCC Peace Section (International), 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501. Deadline for registration is March 24, 1978.

The Report is a bi-monthly publication of the MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church And Society. Correspondence should be sent to Gayle Gerber Koontz, 27 Fairlawn St., Everett, MA 02149.

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